

Building the Iraqi Army: Teaching a Nation to Fish

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Building the Iraqi Army: Teaching a Nation to Fish

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## Executive Summary

Title: Building the Iraqi Army: Teaching a Nation to Fish

Author: MAJ Timothy C. Davis

Thesis: Why did the United States fail to efficiently establish Iraqi security capability in post Saddam Iraq and what can be learned from the evolution of the process of building the security structure in Iraq?

Discussion: The U.S. administration was admonished for the planning and execution of the reconstruction portion of Phase IV (post conflict) as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) specifically not establishing indigenous forces to secure Iraq efficiently in order that the nation could be rebuilt.

- Initially the effort to build the Iraqi Army fell to an ad hoc organization composed of GEN Eaton, four other soldiers and a contractor, Vinnell. The effort to build the police and other security forces fell under the Coalition Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT). Neither organization was provided any substantial planning time prior to March 2003, nor were they manned to accomplish the task.

- Policy mistakes that adversely affected the building of Iraqi security infrastructure included only using contractors for training the Iraq Army, disbanding the Iraqi Army, the lack of unity of effort between security mission, and withholding funds from the Coalition Military Assistance Team (CMATT).

- The building of security forces evolved through several task adjustments. This included increasing resources allocated to CMATT to include the training of 1500 officers in Jordan, the deployment of Army Reserve Institutional Training Divisions (DIV(IT)), and the ever expanding use of military Advisor Support Teams (AST).

- In June 2004 CMATT and CPATT were combined under the Multinational Security Transition Command Iraq (MNSTC-I). Coalition units are integrating Iraqi forces within their brigades that will be augmented heavily by augmentees for ASTs.

Conclusion: The DoD should not ever use ad hoc organizations for missions as important as the building of a nation's security structure. The use of JFCOM Standing Joint Forces Headquarters (Corps Element) and DIV(IT)s are a resource that should be used. The security effort should be weighted appropriately, should have unity of effort, and sufficient planning time allocated. Finally, the second and third order affects of policy should be more closely analyzed prior to adverse decision being made.

## **A. Introduction**

The United States military and government are learning many lessons in rebuilding Iraq after Operation Iraqi Freedom - unfortunately many were avoidable or worse, were lessons relearned. The U.S. administration was admonished for the planning and execution the reconstruction portion of Phase IV (post conflict) as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Planning for post hostilities is like looking into a clouded crystal ball. Among the many tasks that the administration neglected to anticipate, including the planning and resource requirements, was not efficiently and quickly establishing indigenous forces to secure Iraq so the nation could be rebuilt.

While understanding the security requirements after a regime collapse is difficult, the Department of Defense and the administration should have better anticipated the requirement to develop internal and external security forces for post-Saddam Iraq. The scope and immediacy of security needs overwhelmed the plan for developing the Iraqi Army.<sup>1</sup> The lack of understanding of the environment, insufficient resources, ineffective organization, and an incorrect focus of effort at the operational level are issues that affected the building of the Iraqi Army. To the credit of the Coalition members involved, the plan to develop the Iraqi Army evolved based on a willingness to make hard decisions, seize opportunities, and get the job done.

This paper will review the background of the Iraqi conflict with respect to the United States' strategic goals, the effect of Iraqi history and culture on the building of security forces, and the efforts to build indigenous armies by Britain in Iraq during the beginning of the last century. The next step will be to explore the initial organization and

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<sup>1</sup> Michael O'Hanlon, "A Relatively Promising Counterinsurgency War: Assessing Progress in Iraq," 28 October 2003, Brookings Institution, <<http://www.brookings.edu/views/testimony/ohanlon/20031029.htm>> accessed on 28 October 2003.

effort that the Coalition has used to build the Iraqi security forces, specifically the New Iraqi Army. Third, the paper will explore the substance and capability coalition forces are building in the Iraqi forces for the conditions and requirements of Iraq and how these forces can be recruited, trained, and employed as an effective and legitimate arm of the government. Next, the paper will recount the evolution of the mission, intent and structure changes based on the findings of Major General Karl Eikenberry and General (Ret.) Gary Luck. Finally, a summary of the issues and recommendations on the way the United States supports or build foreign armies to support our national goals and host nation's stability will be proposed for the current effort and future conflicts.

## **B. Background**

Once Saddam's regime in Iraq fell and President George W. Bush declared conventional operations a success on 1 May 2003, the focus shifted to reconstruction. This was a gradual shift in balance between combat operations and stability operations. Establishing security is a requirement for the reconstruction effort. An occupying army could accomplish the security mission (given enough resources), but the administration, specifically Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, wanted to execute the mission much lighter than the original 1003 OPLAN resourced.<sup>2</sup> The best option in terms of efficiency with controlling the populace, reducing financial and personnel costs, promoting local international and American support, and strengthening the new government, is to develop the capability for the host nation to secure its own interior and borders. Enabling Iraqis to secure and stabilize Iraq is the key to mission success and a precondition to a Coalition exit strategy.

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<sup>2</sup> KeganLack of forces.

When the conflict began, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld outlined these military objectives, which supported the national strategy objectives during a DOD briefing:

First, end the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Second, identify, isolate, and eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

**Third, search for, capture, and drive out terrorists from that country.**

**Fourth, collect such intelligence as we can relate to terrorists networks.**

Fifth, collect such intelligence as we can relate to the global network of illicit weapons of mass destruction.

Sixth, end sanctions and immediately deliver humanitarian support to the displaced and too many needy Iraqi citizens.

**Seventh, secure Iraq's oil fields and resources, which belong to the Iraqi people.**

**Eighth, help the Iraqi people create conditions for a transition to a representative self-government.**<sup>3</sup>

The highlighted portions represent a large requirement in resources and in investment of time to accomplish in light of the security situation the Coalition found itself in. A speech by former Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz for the House Armed Services Committee on August 10, 2004 outlined direct military actions and *strengthening local capacity* as the two main roles of the military in eliminating terrorist sanctuaries.<sup>4</sup> The weighting of effort between these two goals would shift greatly in the two years following the regime collapse.

This is not the first time an occupational force has had to deal with controlling the complexity of power struggles in Mesopotamia. The history and culture of Iraq explains much of the current threats and issues. Iraq is a country of divisions in religion and race. There are the Kurds who desire autonomy in the north, the powerful minority of the Sunnis in the center and the disenfranchised majority of Shia in the south. Economics has also played a role in dividing the country. For much of its recent history, tribal

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<sup>3</sup> Walter J. Boyne COL, USAF (Ret.), *Operation Iraqi Freedom: What Went Right, What Went Wrong, and Why* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates Book, 2003), 52.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Wolfowitz, "Prepared Statement for the House Armed Services Committee," 10 August 2004 <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2004/sp20040810-depsecdef0661.html> accessed on 1 November 2004.

leaders and landlords have controlled the mostly agrarian population through corruption and land tenure programs. There has also been a disparity between the city populous of Mosul, Basara and Baghdad who have controlled the government and the rest of the country.<sup>5</sup>

Iraqi's history of occupation stretches over thousands of years. In modern history, the Ottoman Empire occupied the area for four centuries. They used army officers trained at the Turkish Military Academy and their own governmental administrators to control the country. The British assumed control of the country after World War I and solidified occupation through the Iraq Mandate during the San Remo Conference of 1920.<sup>6</sup> The British goals in the region were to maintain strategic basing, to maintain lines of communication with the far-east, and to tap into the oil resources.<sup>7</sup>

In August 1921, the British created an Iraqi monarchy under King Faisal to unify and stabilize the nation. As part of the effort to secure the cities and put down revolts the British employed forces of 4,000 Assyrian soldiers, known as Levies, led by British officers. The British government realized that more forces were required, but the government was not willing to accept the expenses of more British Forces and doubted the effectiveness due to the resentment that they would create within the local population. The British assisted the monarchy in establishing a ministry of defense using westernized Arabs trained in Turkey or Europe. Recruiting stations were established in nineteen locations and an army of 15,000 was raised along the lines of the British Army.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Mohammad A. Tarbush, *The role of the military in politics: A case study of Iraq to 1941*, Kegan Paul International: London, 1982, 71-72.

<sup>6</sup> Tarbush, 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> Tarbush, 31.

<sup>8</sup> Tarbush, 73-94.

A number of issues affected the army and eventually the country. The Iraqi officer corps was composed of mostly ex-Turkish or Sharifian and the soldiers were mostly from the tribal agrarian regions of the Kurds and Shi'a. Tribal and religious leaders highlighted this to their communities, which resulted in more distancing of the rural and urban population. Most of the recruits were motivated by economics, not nationalism. The Levies received higher pay, which resulted in decreases in recruitment and increases in desertion in the regular Iraqi army. This issue was eventually solved, but the lessons of motivation and loyalty remain.<sup>9</sup> Iraqi forces experienced desertion when trying to quell insurrections, especially in populaces that they identified with either tribally or religiously.

A power struggle occurred between Britain and the Iraqi government. The Iraqi Army could solve the three political issues of reducing the empire's cost, controlling the Kurds and maintaining power with the established monarchy, but it must remain small enough not to threaten British control of the region. The Iraqi government desired to increase the size of its Army to control the region better and to assert its sovereignty. The cheapest way to accomplish this was through conscription. The British saw this as risky and did not support it. The Iraq Government went ahead with conscription in 1934 and increased the size of the Army to 20,000 by 1935.<sup>10</sup> The animosity created by the burden of conscription on the provinces reduced the support for and weakened the central government.

The leadership of the Army came from the same groups that were leading the government and the officer corps was deeply involved in politics, as they were a major

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<sup>9</sup> Tarbush, 83.

<sup>10</sup> Tarbush, 84-94.

source of power and stability for the government. When King Faisal died, the power vacuum was filled by multiple military coups continually upsetting the government. “The more unstable, ineffective and divided the civil polity becomes, the greater is the likelihood of military intervention. But it may be that the existence of a ‘state within a state’, that is, and autonomous source of authority (in this case the army), contributes to the general conditions of instability, especially if it adopts an interventionary role.”<sup>11</sup>

Saddam's manipulation of the Army continued to emphasize power being controlled by the Sunnis. The Iraqi Army, Republican Guard, Special Republican Guard and secret police controlled through fear and repression. Saddam Hussein used oil revenue to fund the army and the army to control the nation. The centralized and tribally unequal system encouraged nepotism, repression, division, corruption and the development of an extensive black-market. The ability of the populace and crime organizations to operate clandestinely, coupled with mistrust or manipulation of governing authority, continue now to thwart reconstruction efforts.

The current threat and environment is a result of Saddam’s dysfunctional regime, exterior pressure, and anti-western elements. These elements were empowered by dissatisfaction of the populace based on coalition occupation and poor living conditions. Religious fanatic’s attacks attempt to destabilize reconstruction efforts, because the rebuilding is associated with the west and anti-Islamic governments. Religious leaders also fear cultural change and a loss of power and influence over the people. Former Ba’athist regime supporters continue the fight as an insurgency war. Some nationalist and tribes see the Coalition as the source of conflict and encourage or support, either

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<sup>11</sup> Tarbush, 5.

actively or passively, actions that would cause the Coalition to leave. Iran, Syria, Al Quadia and other fundamentalists have either sent or allowed fighters to enter Iraq to disrupt the government and Coalition efforts for their own political agendas.<sup>12</sup>

Crime organizations have a vested interest in the instability of the government to maintain profit and power. “The Government Accountability office said in testimony on March 15, 2005, that CENTCOM assessed in October 2004 that the insurgent ranks include 10,000 “former regime elements (mostly Ba’athist); about 1,000 foreign fighters; about 5,000 criminals and religious extremist; and 3,000 pro-Sadr fighters.”<sup>13</sup> All of these elements have found guerilla warfare the most effective method against the Coalition and their aims of a stable Iraqi government. Each of these groups has different motivations, different power bases, and a different relationship to those Iraqi security forces that the Coalition is charging to enforce control.

“Foreign Internal Defense (FID) refers to the US activities that support a host nation internal defense and development (IDAD) strategy designed to protect against subversion, lawlessness and insurgency, consistent with National Security objectives and policies.”<sup>14</sup> These activities span the elements of national power, but for the military, focus on the support to a host nation’s security effort. Iraq is the extreme case of a FID mission. The existing military and government no longer exist and subversion, lawlessness and insurgency are on the rise from both internal and external threats. There are three forms of FID support: indirect support (security cooperation, assistance, military

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<sup>12</sup> Hoshiyar Zabari, “Iraq: the Road Ahead,” The Saban Center for Middle East Policy, At the Brookings Institute transcript by Federal News Service, Washington D.C., <<http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/events/20031001.htm>> accessed 1 October 2004..

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Katzman, “Iraq: U.S. Regime Change Efforts and Post-Saddam Governance,” CRS Report for Congress RL31339, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Updated 7 January 2004 and updated 5 April 2005. Accessed 20 April 2005, 27.

<sup>14</sup> JP 3-07.1 FID, 1-1.

exchanges, and exercises); direct support (civil-military operations, psychological operations, military training support, logistics, and intelligence); and combat operations (supported rather than supporting.)<sup>15</sup> In Iraq, the American military is working through the spectrum.

### **C. CMATT: The organization to train the New Iraqi Army**

In May 2003, the end to major combat operations in Iraq was announced. Lieutenant General (Ret.) Jay Garner's effort toward reconstruction under Organization for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) was quickly replaced by Ambassador Paul Bremmer's Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The CPA's Special Advisor on Security and Defense, Mr. Slocombe, as part of de-Ba'athification, formalized the disbanding of what was left of the Iraqi Army and established a stipend for the former military. "In retrospect the disbandment of the army was a serious mistake...It release several hundred thousand young men onto the unemployment market, leaving them unpaid and discontented, at precisely the moment when the need became apparent to rebuild Iraq's security forces."<sup>16</sup> This decision to disband the Iraqi Army was made at the Secretary of Defense level or higher.<sup>17</sup> On 9 May 2003, Major General Paul Eaton received a call in Fort Benning, Georgia informing him that he would become the commanding general of the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT) with the mission to build a new Iraqi Army.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> JP 3-07.1 FID, 3-2.

<sup>16</sup> John Keegan, *The Iraq War*, New York: Knopf, 2004, 205.

<sup>17</sup> Major General Paul Eaton, USA, Former Commander, Coalition Military Assistance Training Team, Interview by the author, 24 January 2005.

<sup>18</sup> SGT Jared Zabaldo, "West Point Grad Dubbed 'Father of Iraqi Army,'" Office of Security Transition Public Affairs Office, URL <<http://www.usma.army/publicaffairs/PV/040618/father.htm>> accessed 4 November 2004.

Originally the plan was to build a professional Army consisting of nine light infantry battalions, a small aviation element and a small coastal defense force during the first year of occupation with a budget of \$170 million. A US defense contractor, Vinnell, with multiple sub-contractors was contracted to accomplish this mission under the command of MG Eaton and a team of four.<sup>19</sup> They planned to build whole battalions, one at a time at Kurkush, a former Iraqi Army training facility, seventy miles east of Baghdad. Vinnell was to bring the training teams, provide the security and train the battalions with CMATT's oversight and support. The policy was that the infrastructure and logistics would be contracted to local Iraqi companies or US contractors who would sub-contract to Iraqis. The use of Iraqi firms and the limiting of who could fill what contract was a restrictive policy which supported the Iraqi economy but was a hindrance to the efforts of CMATT. The use of contractors for training was the decision of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld as it allowed task to be accomplished without tapping into military manpower.<sup>20</sup>

The security situation would require a greater throughput to build sufficient forces. On August 25, 2003 GEN Eaton traveled to Jordan to see what resources the Jordanian military were willing to offer to support CMATT. He was impressed with the interaction and professionalism of their military. When asked, the Jordanians agreed to train Iraqi officers. GEN Eaton's experience in battalion command was with a cohort unit. In a cohort unit the whole unit is created at once with a small core of leadership. This cadre of leadership was able to train and develop a unit from scratch building cohesion and confidence in the leadership without the requirement of a large training

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<sup>19</sup> MG Eaton interview.

<sup>20</sup> MG Eaton interview.

infrastructure. GEN Eaton drew from this experience a model to apply to the building of the Iraqi Army. His vision for training the Iraqi Army shifted to the cohort model.

Vinnel continued to build the first four battalions, which were trained by March 2004. But the subsequent decision to increase the scope and method from nine battalions to 27 battalions required a change in the use of the contractors. In conjunction with the necessity to provide immediate employment and the significant desertions issues from the first brigade deployed, the contractors became the supporting effort to the military. The Vinnell model would not work due to the need to increase throughput and build confidence and capability in the Iraqi leadership.

On 5 September the Secretary of Defense approved of the expanded plan and CMATT submitted the request for forces. A small working group developed a Joint Task Force (JTF) built from scratch in 48 hours.<sup>21</sup> The intent was that there would be a joint service team to share the staffing burden. The CMATT staff was built along functional lines.<sup>22</sup> CMATT's mission is to man, train, equip, and advise/mentor nine infantry brigades consisting of 27 motorized infantry battalions, a small coastal defense force and a small aviation unit that would be run by Iraqis. (See Figure 1)

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<sup>21</sup> Colonel James Mulvanna, USA, Former Chief of Staff, Coalition Military Assistance Training Team, interview by the author 23 December 2004.

<sup>22</sup> CMATT Commander's Brief Org chart.

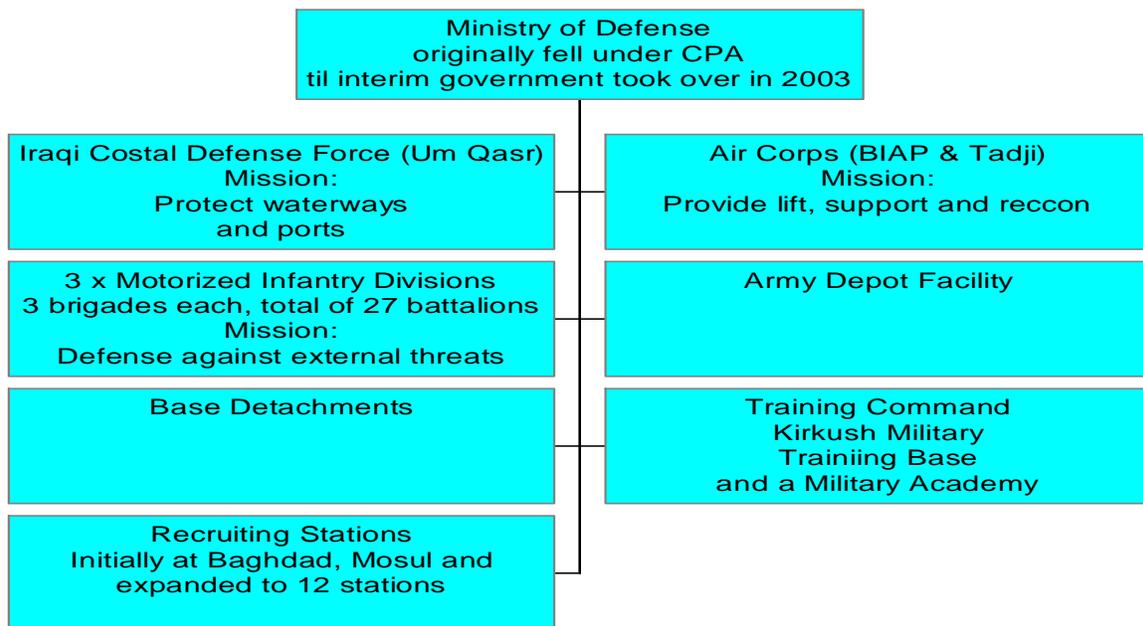


Figure 1: Ministry of Defense Organization Chart November 2003.

GEN Eaton's intent was to increase the throughput in order to create the larger force required. He would focus on Iraqi leadership training to decentralize effort. Jordan would train the Iraqi officer corps at the Jordanian Military Academy in two groups of 750. CMATT would use Vinnell for basic individual training and developing, in conjunction with Coalition members, an NCO academy at Kirkush. Recruiting stations were established in Baghdad, Basra and Mosul initially and bases were identified for the nine brigades. Base facilities would be built and administratively manned by Coalition forces. Advisor Support Teams (ASTs) would support the brigades and battalions from initial training to employment. (See Figure 2)



integrated in country. The U.S. Marines filled the requirement with active duty personnel who received training and integration at Quantico prior to deployment. The Air Force and Navy had to be forced to fill their manning requirements with individual augmentees. GEN Eaton reflected that, "I had everyone on my team. A yeoman, who was a clerk on a submarine, was training Iraqi infantry at Kirkush." Manning for CMATT never went above 45% during GEN Eaton's tenure.<sup>24</sup>

This raises a major issue with the effort to build the army. The planning for building the security forces, like most of the phase IV effort, was late and the support by the services, agencies, and administration was weak.<sup>25</sup> The year prior to combat operations was spent planning and synchronizing the fight, but limited planning and resource were spent on the reconstruction. This issue was manifested in the forming and preparation of the headquarters -- CMATT, and the manning of its sub-elements -- the training bases and the ASTs.

The manning of the headquarters was not built around a unit, but created from scratch. The benefit of joint services operations is to draw on the strengths of all the services while mitigating the weaknesses. With a dwindling military pool in relation to requirements, joint operations also become a way to share the pain. Ad hoc units are created for a specific mission where there are no units trained for the mission or units are not available. "By deploying as an existing unit, forces are able to continue to operate under established procedures, adapting these to the mission and situation, as required."<sup>26</sup> When units are built from scratch, there are no standard operating procedures across the range of functions, no command relationships, training proficiency or organic equipment.

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<sup>24</sup> MG Eaton interview.

<sup>25</sup> Weak planning for Phase four.

<sup>26</sup> JP 3-07 Military Operations Other than War, IV-1.

The issue of the ad hoc formation of the CMATT headquarters could be solved at the macro level by the Department of Defense utilizing the new Standing Joint Forces Headquarters (Core Element) SJFHQ (CE) to focus on reconstruction and become the headquarters for the units to build the security structure. This unit could arrive as the core of an organization to be the Office of Security Transition instead of evolving into it from a totally ad hoc construction. The SJTFHQ (CE) was not a capability at the beginning of OIF, but could now be applied to the next reconstruction effort.<sup>27</sup> As Central Command (CENTCOM) and the Joint Forces Land Component Command (JFLCC) focused on decisive operations, Joint Forces Command's (JFCOM) standing headquarters could be planning and task organizing for the reconstruction effort. It would be a "follow and assume" mission on an operational level.

General Garner's ORHA and Ambassador Bremmer's CPA both suffered through issues with resources, command and support relationships, and ad hoc organizations. Much of their effort was spent on planning, organizing, developing systems and reacting to the environment. Having a military joint headquarters focused on reconstruction would mitigate the first three issues, allowing the reconstruction effort to be more effective and better able to adjust to conditions. Being built before deployment would have allowed this headquarters to oversee the planning, manning and preparation of its sub-units. The CMATT type organization could arrive in country as a cohesive, trained force, thus being more efficient and flexible.

Choosing to use contractor to train the Iraqi forces made sense based on forces available, but did not fit with the ends desired in developing security forces. In a permissive environment when forces are already "soldierized", contractors can be used to

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<sup>27</sup> JFCOM Magazine

train other armies. This is done in Saudi Arabia and other countries. General Eaton's opinion was that, "contracting is OK to impart skills; it is not OK for soldierization."<sup>28</sup> In a non-permissive environment, a division or brigade size training formation must be used. The 98<sup>th</sup> Division (Institutional Training (IT)) from New York deployed to Iraq in the fall of 2004 to assume the mission of CMATT. This is a 3,600 strong Army Reserve unit designed to mobilize US force in time of major theater war. General Eaton stated that he "originally asked for a DIV (IT), but got 350 eaches." It is a useful move to employ this unit, however, Reserve and National Guard units require time then active units in order to mobilize, prepare, and deploy. The key would be early notification and augmentation for the use of Reserve or National Guard units. A DIV (IT) or, in times of more limited national commitment, a reinforced brigade could assume the mission of training parts of a country's security structure. The DIV (IT) would have more senior, mature trainers and a headquarters that is used to dealing with decentralized operations across multiple states, while the brigade would be more self-sufficient logistically, better able to secure itself, and deploy quicker. The important consideration is that a unit with cohesion, established systems, and a chain of command is tasked instead of cobbling a unit together.

Another option for manning would be to deploy a training brigade from the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Training units could be deployed and backfilled by reservists. Reserve drill sergeants and training personnel regularly conduct AT supporting TRADOC. Their job is to fill out or replace active duty soldiers who would be deployed in time of war. Training battalions and teams could be organized and augmented to prepare, train and deploy as a command team to assist and train foreign battalions and brigades while Reserves filled their mission for training the US Army.

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Training bases at Fort Benning, Fort Knox, and Fort Leonard Wood could build the core of these organizations. The benefit would be the wealth of knowledge from the infantry, armor, engineering, military police and logistics schools that could be leveraged.

Forming and training these units prior to deployment would at least establish a cohesive, focused unit and initial group of organized ASTs prior to putting boots on the ground.

Certain augmentation to the CMATT type organization must occur regardless of which manning course of action is chosen. (See CMATT org. chart with changes) The headquarters element (CMATT) must have increased intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination capability. This would assist in screening Iraqis during recruitment and in updating the Iraqi forces and trainers on the threat so that their training and missions can be more focused. The Iraqi soldiers are potentially one of the best sources for intelligence as they can interact better with the populous, can see events in context better, and as members of the military, have some loyalty to the goal of a better Iraq. One of the next sections of the paper deals with resource issues.

GEN Eaton said that, “the rate determining step was infrastructure, add a room, add a squad.” The CMATT headquarters and the respective bases require more contracting and logistic manpower. Civil Affairs teams would be an important addition, especially based on their familiarity in dealing with NGOs and host nation governments. In addition, expertise in communications and base facilities operations is essential. The operations section would also need to be augmented with the capability to train incoming personnel for theater specific issues, integration, and language/cultural training. This type of augmentation was a bridge too far for an organization that was not manned above

50%. It would not be until a year later that priorities would shift in theater to make that manning feasible.

The U.S. military excels at training for major theater war and is exceptional at training and maintaining forces. Training the Iraqis to secure their own country is the critical part of an effective exit strategy. There are two issues with training the cadre that are sent to train foreign armies. The first is that they may or may not execute the task they prepared for, or at least thought they were to accomplish. This contributes to the second, which is that minimal focused and standardized effort is spent on training the cadre and their selection.

A headquarters organization that has had time to plan and prepare prior to deploying to the mission of building an army would also have the time to work out the details of troops to tasks, logistic requirements and training programs. Sending an advance element forward into theater would create a smoother transition and confirm or deny assumptions on the forces and facilities. In Afghanistan and Iraq, many individuals and teams arrived in country only to find another organization already accomplishing their mission or no facilities or troops available to train. These personnel were utilized to accomplish other tasks for the greater good, but not for the task for which they prepared. Adapting the prior organizational recommendations could mitigate this lack of synchronization.

### **Training**

As a military organization, the U.S. training system efficiently maintains the American force structure. The previous mindset on training foreign armies is that it is a

task for Special Forces as one of their nine core tasks.<sup>29</sup> Since Special Forces are now stretched thin around the globe on other missions, this task now falls on conventional forces. It is interesting that the task of training foreign armies went from the most elite forces in the military and then was relegated to National Guard, Army Reserves, and individual replacements at a time when the mission is the most critical for theater and international security. The ASTs and trainers should receive instruction on training techniques and operating with foreign soldiers. This should include operating and teaching through translators, organization and doctrine of the army to be trained, culture, and beginning language skills. This could be provided through the Special Forces or Public Affairs schoolhouses at Fort Bragg or the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation at Fort Benning through resident classes or mobile training teams. This would be in addition to being proficient in their specialty, an assumption when dealing with individual augmentees and flexible troops to tasks arrangements.

The Coalition forces under CMATT included nine nations, mostly from the Britain, and Australian and all four services of the United States. These countries worked well together based on a common understanding, common language (excepting possibly the Jordanians) and regional goals. Other countries such as Jordan assisted and provided a more Arab face and perspective. CMATT began training Iraqi leaders and sent the officers to Jordan in December 2003. The Iraqi military and interim government took some exception to their leaders being trained at the Jordanian Royal Military Academy out of national pride.<sup>30</sup> They believed that Iraqis should train Iraqi leaders. This desire is well founded, as they should train their own as soon as they are able. The Jordanians

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<sup>29</sup> Nine SF tasks

<sup>30</sup> COL Mulvanna interview.

provided a critical training resource that the US could not. Utilizing non-English speaking forces complicates efforts, but brings perspective and expertise that the U.S. does not have. In the case of the Afghanistan Army, Romanians, former East Germans and Mongolians were the primary trainers on operation of Soviet equipment. As the mechanized forces are formed in Iraq one would expect the use of similar expertise; the Poles have committed to training and providing equipment.<sup>31</sup> Coalition forces complicate the command control and logistics of any organization. It will especially complicate the interpreter requirements. There are a range of experience contributions and political benefits to employing Coalition forces that may outweigh the friction caused by the language barriers.

## **Resources**

The biggest current obstacles to CMATT are resources for a training base and equipment for the new units. The equipment will be discussed in the next section on the Iraqi Army itself. The facilities to man and train the new army were devastated and stripped by the conflict. Coalition bombing and Iraqi looting after the regime collapsed resulted in nothing but a shell of the former facilities remaining.<sup>32</sup> Through a Herculean effort, ten Iraqi Armed Forces (IAF) bases now exist. Most of the contracting employed local workers, excepting base security. CMATT, with the assistance of contractors housed, clothed, and fed the army while it was being built. This allowed the fledgling

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<sup>31</sup> Jeremy M. Sharp and Christopher M Blanchard, "Post-War Iraq: A table and Chronology of Foreign Contributions," CRS Report for Congress RL32105 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Services, Library of Congress, updated 18 March 2005), CRS-3.

<sup>32</sup>Walt Slocombe, "DoD News Briefing on the Status of the New Iraqi Army and Police Force." 17 September 2003. [www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030917-0683.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030917-0683.html) accessed on 31 December 2004.

Ministry of Defense (MoD) to focus on manning and war fighting instead of logistics and infrastructure.<sup>33</sup>

CMATT and the Coalition originally did not understand the time it would take to create these facilities based on construction time, the poor condition of the bases, and the delays resulted in the unstable security environment. To compound the challenge, Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz suspended \$250 million that was to let contracts on buildings and infrastructure. This suspension caused a delay in facility preparation and resulted in a three-month delay in building the infrastructure for two division bases<sup>34</sup>. As with any synchronized plan, this delay would have second and third order affects. The entire officer corps for the army would graduate from Jordanian Royal Military academy by June 2004, but did not have soldiers or facilities to join. Some were given additional training while they were waiting, but others were simply sent on leave.

Housing of forces became the chokepoint for creation of forces. The augmentation by engineers, contracting officers, and comptroller is essential for an organization that relies on the creation of infrastructure and has no organic construction capability. A steady flow of cash is essential. Delays in reconstruction funds and contract negotiations negatively affect the synchronization of building forces. This, combined with the challenge of working exclusively through Iraqi sources, which were constantly, disrupted by insurgents, made infrastructure the largest challenge of the first year of the evolution of CMATT. Policy has unintended consequences in spite of good intentions.

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<sup>33</sup> COL Mulvanna interview.

<sup>34</sup> MG Eaton interview.

#### **D. The Army to Build**

There were some forces available in spite of the disbandment of the Iraqi Army. National Guard units, known as Iraqi Civil Defense Force (ICDF) recruited trained and used by Coalition units in the field. There was no common standard of training or equipping for these National Guard type units. They were ethnically homogeneous and helped fill the lack of manpower of the Coalition in respect with the task of securing the entire country. The Kurds in the north were already organized in the well-respected Peshmerga (Kurdish Army). This was a militia army that had fought alongside U.S. Special Forces and the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade during the war. The Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army units had, for the most, part dissolved. The ICDF and Peshmerga supplied the short-term need for troops with about 41,000 trained by Coalition forces by the end of 2003.<sup>35</sup>

The immediate goal of CMATT was to build an army composed of three divisions of three brigades each and a small aviation element and coastal defense force by September 2004.<sup>36</sup> These brigades are light infantry with some wheeled mobility. The original missions assigned to the battalion were to conduct tactical road march, to attack, to defend, to conduct movement to contact, and to conduct cordon and search. In reality these units would operate across the spectrum of conflict in very complex terrain at times against their own population. Brigade staffs, division staffs and a Ministry of Defense are being formed along with developing their own training base capability. Once the Iraqi leadership was developed and shown how to train and raise forces, CMATT let

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<sup>35</sup> Jane's, .

<sup>36</sup> CMATT Command Brief, slide 3.

them train their own personnel. This infantry based core army will allow them to build a military force that suits the need of their free nation based on the decisions of the Iraqi Government.

A large part of the effort in training is to instill values and educate about cultural differences in a military that serves the people, unites the different groups, obeys the law of war and is subservient to the civilian government. The mixing of Sunni, Shiite, and Kurds in the Iraqi Army forces had been accomplished down to the squad level. In April 2004 Interim Defense Minister Ali Allawi appointed General Babakr al-Zibari, a Sunni Kurd as the commander of the army; General Amir al-Hahshimi, a Sunni Arab as chief of staff; and Lieutenant General Dahan al-Assal from Ninawa as deputy chief of staff.<sup>37</sup> The manning of the army was to reflect the population with sixty percent Shia, twenty percent Sunni, twenty percent Kurd, and trace elements of other groups. Sixty percent of the leaders were recruited from former Iraqi forces. Most of the leadership that has been retained is at the lower level and, based on de-Ba'athification, could not come from the Special Republican Guard and other specified organizations. These younger officers were eager to separate from the old way of doing business.<sup>38</sup>

The soldiers are all volunteers. They primarily enlist for employment -- nationalism is a secondary reason to survival. Contrary to common media perception, there is little trouble recruiting even after bombings and terrorist attacks against soldiers and their families. There is, however, an issue of desertion and declining to fight fellow Iraqis. This is natural because those who did not understand what they had signed up for are not those that should serve anyway.

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<sup>37</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessments, accessed 2 April 2005.

<sup>38</sup> MG Eaton interview

Equipping the army, like building the infrastructure, has been a challenge. Much of this should have been anticipated from lessons in Afghanistan. Vehicles were made available from trucks left from the United Nations' oil for food program. The Army needed every piece of uniform and equipment provided from local sources and donations. Much like the U.S. effort in Afghanistan, the logistics would be coordinated through the Coalition using the local economy and donations as much as possible. Weapons were mostly Soviet and ammunition is drawn from existing stockpiles in Iraq. Shortages in body armor are quickly being resolved. The largest shortfall at the end of 2004 was in communication equipment.<sup>39</sup>

The training model for creating 27 battalions focused on the leadership first. Officers that were vetted through the recruiting process attended a three-month training course in Jordan. This included a ten-day induction period followed by class oriented at their specific level of leadership: platoon leader, company commander, battalion and brigade staffs and battalion and brigade commanders. Non-commissioned officers (NCO) attended a NCO academy at Kirkush. Battalions would then be formed and four weeks of leader integration training focused on small unit tactics and team building. Recruits would then receive individual training and then platoon and company level training would occur under the Iraqi leadership. The plan was that, after the individual training was completed, battalions would then be TACON/OPCON to CJTF-7. The immediacy of the security and political environment resulted in the platoon and company

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<sup>39</sup> The web site <http://www.defendamerica.mil> keyword Iraq weekly update provides specific data on reconstruction effort.

level training being conducted during low risk real world missions that met the training objectives.<sup>40</sup>

This training method instills qualities that go beyond numbers of men with weapons. It has great benefits for unit cohesion and national pride. Leaders are certified and develop bonds prior to being exposed to soldiers. This allows a higher level of competence and confidence in the leadership of the new army, especially since the old army was built on loyalty to the Ba'athist and corruption. Using the Iraqis to train the recruits also builds pride and ownership. This pride is demonstrated in the decision to build a military academy in Baghdad to train Iraqi officers in Iraq instead of Jordan. Focusing on the leadership, like teaching a man to fish, builds a solid foundation for a self-sustaining military. This core will build a solid military structure that is desired by the Iraqi people. Care must be taken not to employ these new units beyond their capability or mandate.

#### **E. Unity of effort and weighting the main effort**

The next major shift for CMATT occurred as a result of the Maj. Gen. Karl Eikenberry report to Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in March 2004 on security and reconstruction recommendations for Iraq. This report, which is still classified, cited issues with unity of effort in the organizing, training, equipping and employment of security forces. This resulted in the forming of the Multinational Security Transition Command Iraq (MNSTC-I), which would include the effort to train the Iraqi Police forces under the Coalition Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT) and CMATT. (See Figure 3) CPATT became the priority for the Coalition, as the insurgency

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<sup>40</sup> COL Mulvanna interview.

became the major threat to stability and competes with CMATT for material and training space. The re-organization provides a unity of effort for the security situation and is able to prioritize and manage resources. Employment and policies of the forces still must serve both the Coalition and interim Iraqi government.

## Multi-National Security Transition Command –Iraq (MNSTC-I)

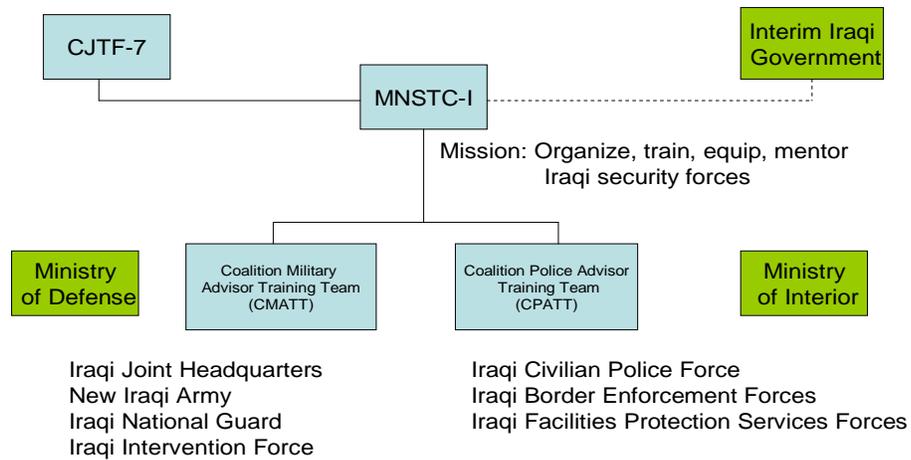


Figure 3: Multinational Security Transition Command Iraq (MNSTC-I)  
Organization Chart (July 2004)

The major concern was generating police forces in the wake of anarchy and looting in areas that were not under the direct control of Coalition forces. The effort to train police forces had formerly fallen under the Ministry of Interior and had not developed as intended. That effort became a priority for the Coalition and interim government. Based on their continuous employment and the rising security situation focused against them, the Iraqi police forces received more machineguns slated for the Army and took precedence for other training resources and equipment.

On 5 April 2004, four American contractors were brutally slain in Fallujah - this would be another turning point for the Iraqi Army. Political pressure encouraged the Coalition to employ Iraqi forces to reclaim Fallujah from insurgents. Supporting I MEF in Fallujah was the first trial of for the New Iraqi Army. The first brigade was employed under a former Iraqi General and entered Fallujah on 30 April. The Iraqis refused to fight on the grounds that they joined to defend Iraq against foreign forces, not to fight in the interior and kill fellow Iraqis. Another Iraqi general was brought in with minimal results. Eventually the brigade was pulled out and a tenuous cease-fire was established.

Coalition forces lost respect and trust in the capability and resolve of the Iraqi forces. If they are unwilling to defend their security then why should we? Some Iraqi forces felt the Coalition had broken its contract with them to only be used against external threats. The Iraqi Army would have to prove itself in deed to the Coalition. This chain of events forced an adjustment made by CMATT, the formation of the Iraqi Intervention Force (IIF). These forces were recruited from the best NIA soldiers and leaders specifically to defeat foreign fighter, terrorists, and insurgents within Iraq. The IIF receive special training in urban operations and counter insurgency. This IIF division (6600 men) would consist of three brigades and receive priority for manning, equipping and training. By September 2004 it was the only army organization filled to 100% and was priority for equipment.<sup>41</sup>

There is a balance between the speed of producing units and quality of units. In a newly formed volunteer army there are bound to be issues with desertion. Those that run under hardship or fire may not be the soldiers one wants to retain anyway. The challenge

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<sup>41</sup> The web site <http://www.defendamerica.mil> keyword Iraq weekly update provides specific data on reconstruction effort

is setting the conditions for success. Creating the IIF is one way to address the issues soldier have with quelling insurrection in their own country. Another is gradually increasing the complexity and threat level of their missions or providing more oversight during operations. America would not send brand new American units straight into war. CMATT and Coalition units developed a template for the integration of Iraqi units. Units that completed basic missions under low risk would be placed under operational control of Coalition forces. On major operations they first executed follow and support missions. Upon proving they could operate effectively, they would receive more challenging missions until they were responsible for their own sectors.<sup>42</sup> This gradual escalation of use will result in more successful operations in their next major challenges.

In August and September 2004, al-Sadr inspired a militia army to secure an area that became known as Sadr City, centered around a Mosque and cemetery. Iraqi Army units fought alongside Coalition forces. In September of 2004 the same brigade that refused to fight the previous year now operated in up to battalion size elements. Iraqi forces provided the language and cultural expertise to deal with situations, which would have been political nightmares for the U.S. forces. When asked what the plan was for defeating terrorist in a mosque, one Iraqi leader responded that they would fire four rockets at the doors and then storm in. He then turned to the religious leader and asked if he had any issues. The leader of the mosque replied, “No get them out of there, they defile a holy site.”<sup>43</sup> In recent operations the Iraqi units proved themselves as a capable and determined force.

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<sup>42</sup> COL Mulvanna interview.

<sup>43</sup> COL Mulvanna interview.

In November 2004 the Marines reinforced by the IIF's 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> battalions and the Iraqi Army's 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> battalions conducted operations in Fallujah to clear it of insurgents. By working with them and developing trust and capability in their units and chain of command, the Marines and Iraqi forces worked successfully together.

November 2004 also saw the deployment of two United States Army Reserve units - - the 98<sup>th</sup> DIV (IT) and the 75<sup>th</sup> Division (Training Support) as the Foreign Army Training Assistance Command (FA-TRAC) into theater. This unit will assume the mission of CMATT headquarters and provide 31 of the 36 ASTs. Their assistant division commander for support, COL Bill Clegg stated, "This approach differs from how support was provided in the past because the 98<sup>th</sup> will provide a unit based solution." With seven DIV (IT) s and five Training Support Divisions in the reserves the Army could support this mission with this type of unit while meeting its other requirements for these reserve units.<sup>44</sup>

Issues still remain in the Iraqi Army and other security forces. There are still equipment shortages in communications gear, weapons and body armor. But the weapons and body armor shortfalls are quickly being remedied. Communications capability was an issue when building the Afghan Army and is now an issue with the New Iraqi Army. The Coalition needs to throw a lot of money to make the Iraqis interoperable with Coalition forces and able to command and control their own forces, especially in the complex terrain. There have already been fratricide issues with Iraqi security forces and Coalition forces, which better communications, could have mitigated.

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<sup>44</sup> "Fast Tracking...Army Reserve Speeds Iraqi Army Training," Washington DC: U.S. Army News Release, Army Public Affairs, 8 October 2004, URL: [http://www.dod.gov/news/Oct2004/n10082004\\_2004100814.html](http://www.dod.gov/news/Oct2004/n10082004_2004100814.html) accessed 2 April 2005.

The Iraqi logistics support will need to rely on the Coalition for some time. But they are heading in the right direction. They have stood up transportation battalions to support the maneuver brigade's logistics. This allows the maneuver units' transportation assets to focus on mobility instead of supply. The addition of mechanized force has begun with the forming of a mechanized brigade that consists of 10 refurbished T-55s and forty-five other armored vehicles. The United Arab Emirates donated thirty-eight Panhard M3 wheeled armored vehicles to the Iraqis.<sup>45</sup> CMATT expanded their training of combat support and combat service support personnel.

The New Iraq Army is developing and gaining momentum in capability and legitimacy. The Iraqi people and insurgents are realizing that this is a different force than the former regime. Their relation to civilian government will be the key. Some of that will depend on the direction the civil government takes and how they use their own security forces. Like raising a child, once they are on their own there are risks with self-determination. America must continue to support and guide the new nation without being overbearing. The Coalition must empower the Iraqis by giving the credit to their government and allowing them to make decisions.

The year 2005 saw changes in Iraq and our approach to securing the country. Training the security force became the stated main effort of the Coalition as the leadership realized that security in Iraq by Iraqis is the exit strategy. In March 2005, the last of the 27 battalions completed training are now employed. In addition, a completed national vote has given the people a voice and the beginnings of ownership in their new

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<sup>45</sup> Joe Kane, CPO, "Iraqi Mechanized Brigade Roles Out Heavy Equipment," U.S. Department of Defense News, 30 November 2004, URL: <http://defendamerica.mil> keyword Iraqi Mechanized Brigade, accessed 31 December 2004.

country. The counter-insurgency is not successful yet, but has definitely evolved greatly from the disparate under-resourced effort of a year and a half prior.

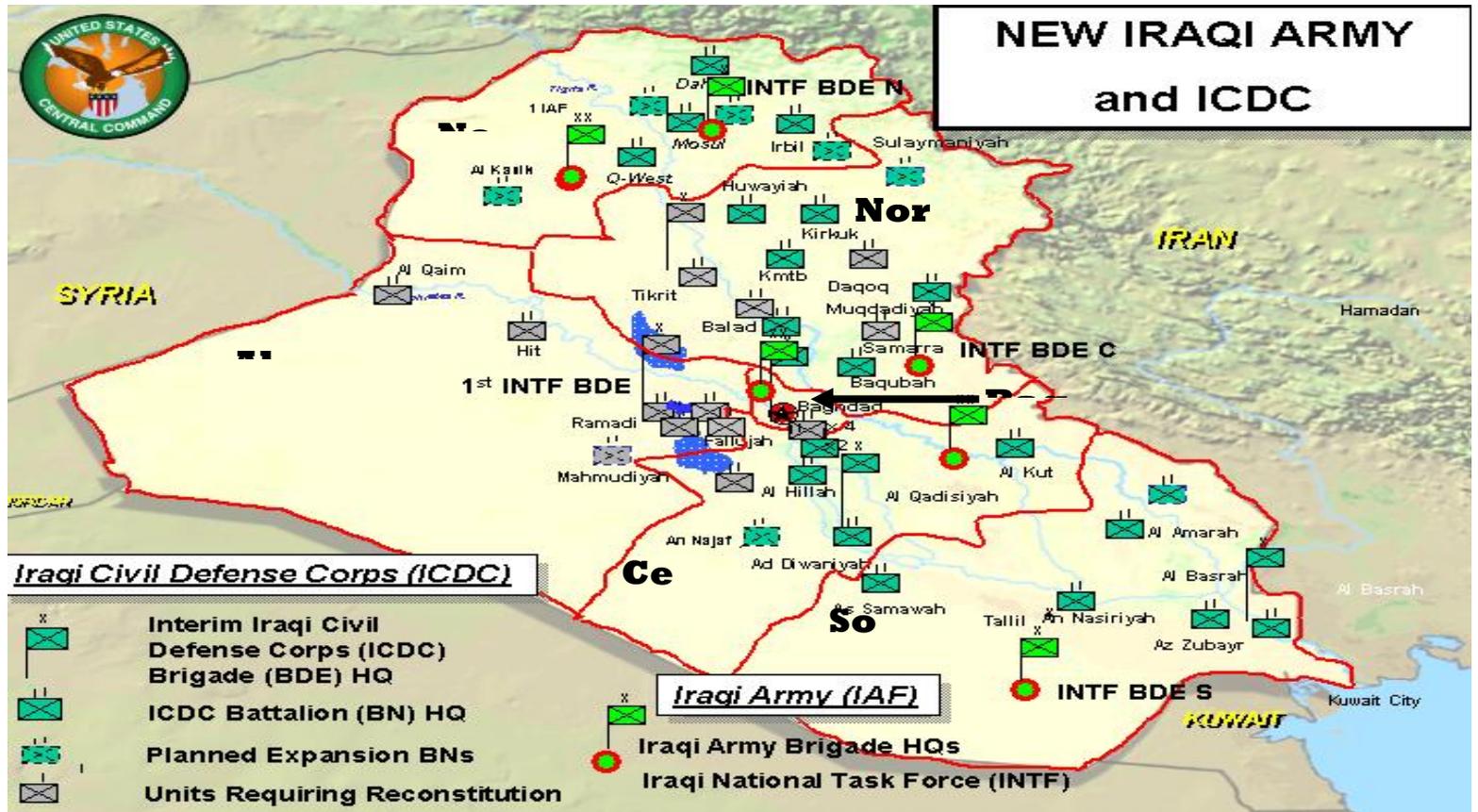


Figure 4: IAF locations

Most of the Iraqi units are now based in their specific region under control of that sector's Coalition force commander. (See figure 4: IAF locations) Coalition units are integrating Iraqi forces within their brigades. (See Appendix B: Task Organizations) The brigades will be augmented heavily by augmentees for ASTs and specifically tasked to focus on increasing the capability and reliance on Iraqi Security forces. Through working together, battlefield experience and attrition of the unwilling and unable, the Iraqi forces have developed confidence and competence that both they and the Coalition realize.

There are still issues with leadership, corruption and infiltration by insurgents, but there are more positive reports than negative as this force has evolved.

One encouraging development in international support is the NATO Training Mission Iraq (NTM-I). In the fall of 2004 NMT-I was formed at the request of the Iraqi Interim Government and fell under the command of LTG Petraeus, commander of MNSTC-I. Initially 60 personnel from Canada, Hungary, Norway, the Netherlands, and Italy are participating in Iraq; by March they numbered 117 with an expected growth to 600. These international contributions in personnel, training facilities outside of Iraq, equipment, and money not only support the effort to improve the security structure, but increase the legitimacy in international eyes and international buy-in.

### **Summary**

The development of MNSTCI has evolved greatly from the cottage industry started by MG Eaton with four soldiers, Vinnel Corporation, and \$170 million in May 2003, which was focused exclusively on the Iraqi Army. MNSTC-I and the mission of building the security infrastructure of Iraq is now the focus of the Coalition. The situation has improved and the groundwork has been laid, but many issues still remain and perseverance will be the key. The United States and the Coalition in Iraq will continue to adjust and our institutions need to apply the lessons of Afghanistan and Iraq to the next conflict. The Department of Defense and Department of State have still not solved the strategic and operational problems associated with planning and executing reconstruction.

The U.S. government will need to become more efficient at resourcing these efforts. Too much time and effort has been spent trying to get resources such as

weapons, uniforms, transportation, and communication gear. The investment in infrastructure must be quick in order to gain return in more efficient organizational capability. This brings back the planning issue. Capital in the form of time and staff for planning must be allocated to the deep fight. The use of USJFCOMs SJFHQ to plan the deep fight while the regional combatant commander's staff plans the close fight will allow us to maintain tempo militarily and politically.

As the U.S. transforms its military, consideration of the operational requirement should drive some changes in respect to FID. The FID mission must be embraced beyond the SF community. COCOMs and thus SJTFHQ should include it in their phase IV and security cooperation plans. Planning for phase IV must start in advance so units can adjust and be augmented to accomplish the mission instead of units being created from scratch. IT divisions, active brigades, foreign trainers, and training brigades could all form task forces to be the core and sub-units for the effort to build or strengthen foreign militaries. Currently DoD is still using individual augmentation. Maximizing local capability will be essential as the US and its allies are stretched thin across the globe.

NMCSTC-I has evolved slowly into the organization it needs to be, but much time and opportunity has been lost based on this learning curve. It took precious time to develop infrastructure and build international and U.S. capacity to improve the security situation and the job is far from over. The organization has always been moving in the right direction, but the starting point was unnecessarily far from what was need in Iraq. Lessons in ad hoc organization, resourcing, and unity of effort do not need to be repeated in the next conflict.

## **Recommendations:**

In future operations of the scale of Afghanistan or Iraq, the United States must take a closer look at the second and third order effects of policy on the problems at hand. Disbanding the Iraqi Army not only reduced the amount of security forces, but also increased the pool of possible insurgents. The constraints on resources in the form of contract regulations and the micromanagement of the dispersal of funds resulted in operational delays that greatly affected the mission. Commanders reconstructing a country should not only have control of funds, but also have the staff capacity in the form of more contract officers and comptrollers in order to leverage those funds. Policy and organizational framework based on reconstruction decisions must contribute to unity of effort and not create command and control issues such as the division of the police force development and the army development. Many of these issues could have been resolved if the administration would acknowledge that the military is better at planning and empowered the DoD to plan for phase IV operations.

Ad hoc organizations are not the answer to complex and important problems. At the NMC-I/CPA level the JFCOM Standing Joint Forces Headquarters (Corps Element) (SJFHQ (CE)) must be manned and tasked to plan for phase IV operations. This would allow the regional combatant commander's staff to focus on the close fight, while the JFCOM SJFHQ (CE) focuses on the deep fight. Based on their proximity to Washington D.C. this would have the added benefit of working closer to the policymakers and interagency organizations. At the lower levels, U.S. Army Reserve Divisions (Institutional Training) should add to their METLs the training of foreign security forces and they should be manned and trained to accomplish this mission. Both of these units

could then be augmented with specific capabilities such as intelligence, military police, linguist, civil affairs, etc. as needed. Building off of a unit designated to perform the FID or theater security cooperation mission will reduce friction and increase capability, as opposed to building an ad hoc unit from scratch. Now is the time to make these changes since the institutional knowledge is fresh in the force and the time and opportunity lost in the Iraqi security effort is still in the minds of the leaders and policy makers.

**Conclusion:**

Coalition forces and the American government and the people must lower their expectations and increase their patience. America's enemies have learned that the best way to engage and defeat the U.S. is to attack coalition resolve, discredit coalition and IIG capability to secure and maintain their forces through insurgency tactics. Utilizing host nation forces or surrogate armies will penetrate the population, negating the insurgent's ability to swim in the sea of the people. But these operations take time, patience, and resolve. Host nation armies are not the highly trained and equipped professional forces of the US, Australia or Great Britain. They will learn quickly, fight professionally, and die for their country, but they will experience growing pains.

It took the United States army over two hundred years to get to this point. One cannot expect a fledgling democracy to get there overnight, but the immediacy and lethality of the threat requires the US military to prepare host nation forces well and do it quickly. As part of phase IV operations the United States must apply more means to the planning, resourcing and execution of building an organic security environment. The DoD must develop organizations and sustain the capability to plan for and build that

security environment. Teaching a nation how to secure itself is the first step to a successful exit strategy.

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